

A father's Meeting

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Summary: An unconcsious bruce Wayne has an interesting conversation with Dick Grayson's parents

A father's Meeting

DISCLAIMER: Well, this is my first fan-fic, so any comments would be great. Of course, these are DC characters, I make nothing writing these. I also want to mention that I took the cue from syl that Dick looks just like his mom from the story "MY Fathers Son." so... enjoy the story!! I hope!!! :)

He crouched low so as to allow the evening shadows to hide his silhouette. Bruce Wayne had a busy evening ahead of him. Billy Landoli, a specialist in explosives, was brought up from Miami to take care of a certain "housing" problem. He was assigned by Toolan Hammer, the leader of a shoot- first- ask later- kinda gang. Hammer ran the loan- sharking business and when people couldn't pay back their loans, Hammer usually just hired someone to blow them away. Unfortunately, the GCPD were starting to keep tabs and were running up some undercover men to expose his "unorthodox" practices. Even worse, that measly vermin was after him too. He figured the best course of action was to dispose of the "offenders" by just blowing up their house. Well, of course, the people who couldn't pay were in the house and the house was never really blown up. Police and arson experts could only conclude that It was either an electrical fire or a cigarette that lit the place like a Christmas tree. Landoli was good and he made every job look like an accident.

"God Bless Landoli!! Yes man, you have made a happy man out of me. You realize that? That damn good for nuthin flyin rat and those clunk-head cops came up with squat on that last gig." With that Hammer glanced over at Landoli and slapped him on the back.

"Hah! That's the fifth rat I've iced, oh, you wait, word getin round no one and I mean no one is foolin me. All those bastard mongers are scared now. They all pay up so darn quick you'd think that they'd be scared I'd kill them. Gee, why ever would that be huh, Landoli?"

"My ma always wanted me to be a doctor, I'd say 'Ma, I want to make money and work for the mob or somethin,' she slapped cross the face and said never she ain't never wanna hear those words from my mouth again. Well, now that I put her in one of the nicest homes in Miami and she's livin it up while her old buddies are croaking, she says mobbin's okay. That's my old lady." He laughed whole- heartedly.

As the conversation continued, Bruce couldn't help but feel disgust grow deep in the pit of his stomach. While Landoli and Hammer when were making clean get-aways, many innocents were dying right along with those who did cross the wicked path of Hammer. Taping the conversation, Bruce wasn't going to let them get away, not anymore, not again. This tape would be enough evidence for Gordon.

Bruce silently muttered to himself, "Pay back time, Hammer."

Glass shattered beneath his feet as he made contact with the window and immediately thrusted his right leg into one of the goons stomach.

" Nooooo!!.. Not now, not in my prime, I don't care what the hell you punks do, but get that damn bat away from me. NOW!!! " screamed Hammer as he tried desperately to get away, but his attempt proved fruitless as he crashed with a thud from a tight rope that suddenly found its way encompassing Hammer's legs.

Batman dodged and jumped over bullets as he usually did with ease, when suddenly, a feeling rippled his shoulder. He quickly glanced at the location of the pain and saw a feathered dart sticking out of his left shoulder.

"What in the " he was unable to finish as his words were lost in the sea of his own unconsciousness.

"Now what do we do boss, should we kill him?" asked Tommy Loot, the biggest goon in the bunch. He could knock Superman through a few walls.

"No, he gets rid of my competition, lets just get the hell out of here and get the damn tape!!! Without that he ain't nuthin. Let's move before he wakes up. Well... what the hell are you idiots waiting for? Get on it!!! "

A strange feeling starts at the base of his neck and goes down to his spine. He hears nothing, no voices; just silence. He tries to open his eyes, but white is all he can see. God, he thought, am I dead?

"You're not dead," a voice said. Icy and deep with authority. It wasn't angry, it was just... hurting somehow.

"I said you're not dead. You passed out and somehow you ended up

here. Must have a pretty serious concussion there."

Bruce slowly began to open his eyes and the first thing he noticed was his armored hand. Good, he still had his gloves on where he kept a variety of utilities. He then felt that his cowl was gone. Great, he thought, I'm unmasked now too. Then his eyes searched out for the voice and finally settled on a man about two feet away from him.

The man's physical appearance was that of a man in excellent shape, big muscular arms with midnight black hair and with greyish eyes and dark skin. A hollow, olivey color. He was wearing simple jeans and a T-shirt and looked to be not a day over 30, if that.

"Who are you?" Bruce forced out, his throat was quite dry, probably from the drugged dart.

"Huh," the man laughed. "Never one for small talk are you Wayne."

"How do you

" How do I know who you are? Well, allow me to come closer, maybe bring you a glass of water to clear that terribly raspy throat of yours. Take a look and see if I look familiar. I'm very close to someone you know."

As the man advanced, Bruce's eyes widened, in order to take in the whole appearance. Something about this man was familiar, but what was it? Not the eyes or the nose. Not the voice or hair. Wait....

The smile and the mouth. That though... that was familiar. That quirking kind of smile that makes everything okay and that clears away the clouds. That hand gesture that says he's finished, that standing position.

It was Dick Grayson's smile, his hand gesture and that was the way Dick would stand if he was just relaxing, reading, or intently pondering something.

All thoughts went immediately to that small framed picture that had been on Dick's bedside since he was a little boy. All thoughts went to that little boy that had been left alone. No Mommy no Daddy no grandma or grandpa, aunt or uncle. Just a lone little boy.

"My God.... it can't be, it's not possible..."

"So, you do recognize me? And it is possible, anything is possible when you're in mental limbo, which you apparently are in."

"John... John Grayson." The two words came out more as a question than a statement.

"Yes, you do impress me Mr. Wayne, I wasn't sure if my son would have any of my traits that you'd recognize."

With that Bruce was speechless. This was unbelievable.

"Here, Bruce, I have no manners, my wife would have yelled at me by now, come and sit down." And with that, John led Bruce down a cloudy

hallway and into a kitchen type scenario with two chairs and a table. Bruce quickly sat down and stared at the man across from him for two very long minutes.

"I can only imagine what a shock this must be to you..."

"How do you know my name?" Bruce uttered, not taking his solid glance off of John Grayson

"The dead are not blind or deaf. They can hear, see and feel, just in very limited ways. Only when the feeling is so loud, so obtrusive can we start to hear, then, if the feeling is unrelenting, can we see. My son's feelings held such a deafening tone that Mary and I were able to see him a little. Especially immediately following our deaths. We saw our child, you, and an older gentleman."

"Alfred, my... our butler and long time confidant and friend."

"I see."

Silence then reigned for a few minutes between the two, when finally something on Bruce's mind fought its way to the forefront.

"He doesn't look much like you."

With that, John Grayson cracked a smile, "I know. When he was young, he always looked exactly like his mom. Used to hate it. Yet, with those blue eyes and ski jump nose, no one could deny he was Mary's son."

"Where is your wife, is she with you?"

"Yes, she'll come in due time."

"Oh."

"I don't know exactly what to say to you Wayne. My first and foremost feeling right now is utter gratefulness. For taking my son in. For helping him and watching him and loving him when no one else would. You got him out of that Juvenile jail and have saved his life dozens of times. When I saw where he was... I remember, feeling that racking sadness, it was as if such a strong deep feeling could not possibly come from anything or anyone that small, but it had. It had come from my child no less. My son was dying. It was like a drill going through your body, that's how much his cries hurt both him, me and my wife. God Wayne, could you imagine, feeling and hearing, even seeing your child hurt that bad, but being absolutely helpless?"

Bruce looked at this man with deep comprehension in his eyes. But for some reason, felt resigned to voice it.

"No. I couldn't"

"So blinding was that pain that when I even think about it, it makes me sick. Mary still cries everyday. So do I." "Why, how the hell could people, who claim to watch out for children, throw an orphaned little boy into a jail? huh? How the hell can they do that, yet, he couldn't stay with a "corrupting" circus. With his family."

John Grayson obviously had some built up rage, and of course, Bruce

couldn't blame him. He, himself was towering with anger when he found out about a little boy who was practically locked in a cell just for being orphaned. It was more than Bruce Wayne would stand for.

"He was supposedly waiting for a foster home. That's when I decided to take things into my own hands."

John looked on with a sharp glance, " I know. Batman."

"A bat wouldn't be my first choice, but I must say, I'm sure it strikes terror into the hearts of evil -doers, huh?"

Amazing thought Bruce. Absolutely amazing. If that wasn't John Grayson sitting right there in front of him, he could have sworn it would have been Dick uttering those same words. That skill, that talent to turn such a dark and somber conversation into something a little lighter, something a little less scary and bad. By watching Mr. Grayson and listening to him, it allowed Bruce a little introspection into the origins of Dick's personality. This is how he came out so balanced, Bruce thought.

"How do you feel about that, I mean, about the path I have placed Dick upon, the path of a vigilante?"

"At first, I hated you for it. As if my son hadn't been through enough. Wayne believe you me, a little after you took Dick in, my initial feeling of thankfulness was gone. You were a cold self-righteous bastard. You had my son, you had access to hug him, to tell him everything was going to be okay, to take care of him, to watch him grow up. You had everything I was never going to be allowed to have and I hated you for it. And you know what killed me even more. The fact that you threw that all away as if it didn't matter. When he first arrived, you didn't hug him, tell him everything was going to be okay, you didn't even spend time with him. Nothing. It was as if you didn't care. It was as if he was truly alone again."

"I know. I'm sorry, but it wasn't like that. I cared a lot for Dick, I just..."

" I know. You didn't know how to show it because of your parents. I know, I know, but I didn't care then and I don't care now. Then suddenly, you do start acting humane towards him and ask him to train to be your damn partner, to risk getting killed every night with you. Oh Wayne, don't think for a minute that I liked what was happening. I wanted my son to have a normal life, one he never had in the circus and doesn't it figure he gets adopted by the Batman."

With that John, stared accusingly at Bruce and Bruce didn't know quite what to say. He always tried to do the best thing for Dick, not really even thinking about what his parents would have thought. And here, he was, discussing approval with Richard Grayson's father. His real father.

" I didn't realize..."

"Hold on Wayne, before you continue, I want you to know where I stand now on the issue of him being Robin. I'm proud of him. Very, very proud of him. He's a hero and has worked hard for everything he's ever accomplished. Nothing came easy to him. He worked for

everything. It's what he's always wanted to do and what he was destined for. Ever since he was a child, he was always helping people. If it wasn't helping the clowns with their make-up, it was helping one of the baby elephants balance a ball on his trunk. My son loved to help people. And he's doing what he loves. And for that Mr. Wayne, I am grateful to you."

With that, various questions were bouncing around in Bruce's head. John Grayson mentioned his current feelings on the issue of Dick being Robin. Didn't he know that Dick was no longer Robin? What other events did Mr. Grayson know about? And even though he knew that this conversation had little or nothing to do with his mother and father, he wondered about his own parents, if, like the Graysons, they had seen and heard him and if they had disapproved or not. Yet, for the time being, he decided to remain silent.

"So as you can see Mr. Wayne, my relationship of that with you is very much love-hate. I love you for allowing Dick to have that release valve, for giving that to him, but do I ever hate you and am I ever jealous. You saw him get his drivers license, you saw him graduate high school. You saw his adult smile when he lost all his baby teeth. Tell me Wayne, I bet you've never even thought of stuff like that huh? Stuff like Dicky losing his baby teeth, stuff like his homework getting increasingly harder, little gradual things."

"Honestly, not to that extent."

"Of course not... Mary and I spend everyday of our lives thinking about those things. God, you get to spend so much more time with him than I did. You'll see him with girlfriends, marriage, children.... the list goes on. I saw first steps, first words... first flying transfers."

Grayson added that with a smile. Talking about it was obviously making things a little better. Not much, but a little.

"I just remember hearing that snap and seeing the floor coming up to meet me. And hearing that small scream. And seeing my wife hit the ground a millisecond before me. I.... just remember."

Tears were beginning to cascade down the other man's face. Bruce didn't know what to say. How can you comfort someone who has had the most precious thing in the world taken away from him and he may never see it again. How?

"Okay," Grayson cleared his throat, "enough of this, huh? I want to ask you some questions and I'm sure you have questions for me."

"Well, yes." Bruce stuttered, something he never does. "Do you know what Dick is up to currently in his life?"

"Funny Batman, you anticipated my question. No, I don't. Thankfully, he hasn't been real upset as of lately. We can only feel his emotions when he's real upset and because his emotions haven't been super strong, Mary and I are in the dark. I am aware of a name change though. Nightwing, right?"

"That's correct."

"Where in the world did he think that one up?"

Trying to stifle a small smile, Bruce said "I honestly can't answer that."

"Yeah, the last thing Mary and I saw was the Valley problem. You remember, you chose him to take your place over Dick."

"Yes. I remember quite well."

"Yeah. He was reeling from that one for awhile, sometimes, we can still feel his lack of confidence."

"Yes, well, it was a disastrous decision and ..."

"And my son, came back to save the day anyway."

Bruce finished "Yes. Because he is a hero."

"Yes, he is a..."

Suddenly, their conversation was interrupted by a sweet female voice. A voice as small and beautiful as the person from which it came.

"John, I hear voices, what's..... oh my God.....

It took a good five minutes to get Mrs. Grayson speaking. She was overcome with such overwhelming shock that she nearly fainted. As for Bruce he was overcome with shock as well. When Mary Grayson had walked through the door, he could tell exactly who she was by appearance alone.

God, he thought, Dick looks just like her.

That face, the nose, the eyes, the hair, everything. What was even stranger was that Mrs. Grayson was a beautiful, beautiful woman. No wonder when Dick was a child he disliked looking like his mother so.

After what seemed like endless minutes of silence, Mary spoke up first.

"What does he look like now, please, if you could just tell me what he looks like?"

Such a simple request, yet so heartbreak. These two people, who would have done anything for their child are left with only once- in a -blue- moon feelings when he feels bad and are asking for a description of him now, by practically a stranger. They wanted him to describe what Dick... no... They want more then just a description. They want a sense of what and who Richard John Grayson is now. They want to know what that child they had love so much for such a short amount of time has turned into.

"He's..." Bruce was starting to realize this was going to be harder then he thought. "He looks just like you."

With that, Mary Grayson smiled and glanced over at her husband. "Hear

that hun, he still looks like me."

"Yes, dear, I believe it. We're sure I'm the father right? If I remember correctly we never really had that checked out." John Grayson said with a smile while Mary elbowed him in the side and laughed out loud.

Such a wonderful couple. He wondered how many people probably said that after they died, so ... uplifting, like Dick.

"Go on Bruce, ignore my husband." Mary said with a devilish grin.

"Well, he looks just like you. He's pretty tall about 5'10 and has piercing blue eyes, black, black hair, and a medium frame, I suppose like an aerialist or gymnast would have."

"Yep." they both uttered in unison.

"So important to have that frame there, well as far as trapeze goes, but I guess it's a bit different for ... heroics or whatever you call it."

"A little bit, but what Dick lacks, he always makes up for with his acrobatics and agility."

"He sounds so handsome," Mary said turning to her husband.

"Yes, he's very handsome." Bruce added, trying to allow these people the best glimpse possible into what their son looks like. He felt so at ease talking to these people, as if they were family. I guess in one sense, they kind of are, he thought.

" Any women problems?" John asked slyly, slightly anticipating the answer.

"Well, if you call having a lot of women knocking at your door all the time a problem..."

John quickly lamented, "that's my boy!!"

"John, stop, I mean, he is a gentleman, right?" Mary sounded generally worried.

"Mrs. Grayson, he is indeed and that's precisely why the women are always knocking." and with that she seemed to ease.

Mary had a question that she was burning to ask. "Mr. Wayne, what about anyone serious, has he found anyone that he truly likes?"

"There have been a few. There was a Princess Koriandr', she was an alien from the planet Tamaran and Dick had met her through their group, the titans, where he was the leader for years as a matter of fact, and had actually planned to get married, but it was destroyed by a... slight invasion of an unwanted visitor."

They both looked at Bruce Wayne speechless. They must have thought he was crazy.

"An unwanted visitor? What did somebody object?" John asked.

"No, but let's just say that neither Dick or Kory were ready for such a large step."

"Yes, he's terribly young to marry. God... he's in his early twenties by now. All those years...." Mary began to loose composure and John continued the conversation for her.

"Does he have a job now, other than saving lives?"

"Well, he is training for another job, but it does involve saving lives. He's training to become a Bludhaven police officer. He did bartend for a bit, just to get started though and he relies on the people there for information."

Mary's blue eyes widened. "Wow, a police man, huh? Officer Richard Grayson," she announced proudly. Tears starting to stream down her face.

"Well, he wants to help this city in more ways then one. He wants Dick Grayson to help the city as much as he wants Nightwing to."

Both Mary and John looked at each other, tears in their eyes, holding each others hand.

" Is he seeing anyone now?" Mary asked.

"Now he's just focusing on work at the police academy and cleaning up Bludhaven. We don't talk much about these kind of things, but I've heard he has been speaking to Oracle or Barbara Gordon more than what is absolutely necessary."

Immediately Mary Grayson piped up, "Oh, what's she like?"

Immediately John asked "Why don't you talk about those kind of things with Dick?"

"To answer Mrs. Grayson's question first, she's a highly intelligent, red head and. .. she was a vigilante also, Batgirl, but one night, a nemesis of ours, the Joker, rang her door bell and shot her through her back. She's paralyzed."

"Oh my God, that's awful." Both the Graysons were filled with pity for a girl they never met.

"Yes, but now she's Oracle, and....."

Bruce immediately felt this stinging in the back of his head. It felt hot to the touch and was aching with a dull throb.

"Bruce" Mary hollered, "What's wrong?"

"He's going to be leaving soon. We better make this quick and say our good-byes."

Mary looked at her husband with acquiesce in her eyes. John quickly spoke up.

"I still wanted an answer to why you don't talk about those kind of things with Dick, but I know what it'll be. Start talking about that stuff. You never know when it will all come crashing down. But I'd like to thank you again for all you've done. And I know you wanted to know some things about your parents. This I can tell you. They love you and are so very proud of you. But they want you to stop hurting. It has to stop Bruce. They're begging you. If not for yourself, for them. They hurt every time you do and they want it to stop. As for my son, Bruce please hug him for me. Just take him in and hold him for no reason. Just for me Mr. Wayne, please. I'd kill to be in your position when you have him in your arms, remember that."

" I will and ... I'm sorry that you got cheated out of your time with him."

"And I'm sorry that he got cheated out of his time with me and that you got cheated out of your time with your father. We were cheated out of time that we will never get back. All we can hope for is that our children, you and Dick, will live happy, long lives and that in the end, we will be together again."

With that said, Mary Grayson approached Bruce Wayne and offered him a quick embrace and a few teary words.

"Thank you Mr. Wayne, and tell him how much I love him and how much I miss my little Robin."

"I will."

"Bruce," John Grayson had a more on his mind.

"Could you please repeat this phrase to him. It was something I said to him when he was a child. Mi nischa veta poco albra. By the way, you've done a good job raising him."

"Thank you. I just picked up from where you left off...." And with a solemn look, the three people departed. One with the face of a father whose heart has been ripped from his chest, a mother whose empty eyes were full of tears, and another father who looked like he had seen a ghost.

Slowly, senses were coming back. First, he felt the cold, dank floor, then he heard cars passing by, specifically, police cars. Then, he felt under his utility belt to realize Hammer had gotten away with the tape.

"Damnit!!!"

"Old friend, are you okay?" asked a timbering voice, a man who was deeply respected in the heart of the bat. Jim Gordon stood perched over Batman who was coming to grips with the fact that he had failed to capture Hammer. Again.

"Don't worry about Hammer and Landoli. We got'em. Running away from the scene. The medics wanted to take you away, do some tests, but I said no. That they'd have to give you the medicine here. You can't risk the removal of the party hat, now can you?"

"Yes Commissioner, thank you. I have to go."

"Right, well, thank...." of course, the bat was gone. Not even a bristle of wind could be felt as the dark figure flew off into the night.

Commissioner Gordon just shook his head. "Figures."

*** A lovely morning such as this called for Alfred's special pancakes. A celebration was in order for the very fact that Master Bruce didn't come home with a life threatening injury. Harrah!, Alfred thought.

"Alfred, I ran into some very interesting people last night."

"Really, Master Bruce. Was it a man who dressed as a scarecrow or was it the stout gentleman who talks to a puppet on his hand?"

"Neither this time old friend. It was Dick's mother and father."

Alfred skipped dropping the spoon of his batter to plain dropping the batter on the floor completely. Something the ever composed butler has never done before.

"Pardon me Master Bruce."

"Yes Alfred, I was shot with some type of tranquilizer last night and I don't know if I was in a dream or in some kind of "mental limbo" as Mr. Grayson put it, but I spoke with them, about Dick."

"Master Bruce. You mean to tell me that you spoke to the deceased parents of Master Dick, the people that have occupied the table space near his bed since his arrival?"

"Yes Alfred. And they... they were just like Dick."

"Excuse me sir?"

"They were just like him. I could speak to them. They were uplifting and the nicest people I have ever met. And Dick looks just like his mother."

"My goodness."

"They have seen some of what Dick has gone through, but most of all, they have felt his emotions. They knew who you and I were, Alfred. And they would do anything to be in our positions now."

"Oh, I am sure of that Master Bruce. Just as I am sure your parents would have done anything to be in my position when I was raising you."

"I promised them both something and I intend to keep that promise. Tell Dick to come down from Bludhaven. It's an emergency."

"Master Bruce, do you think that is wise, after everything that..."

"Please Alfred."

Alfred reluctantly agreed. "As you wish, sir."

*** A young man came bursting through manner with a mix of worry and anger. This better be good, Dick thought to himself. Staying in police training was hard enough while being a vigilante and Dick thought if he missed any more days, he'd be kicked out for sure.

"Alfred, what's going on, what was so urgent you couldn't tell me over the phone?"

"Master Dick, I fear you will be angry with Master Bruce, but please don't and hear him out. He just wanted you here to talk."

"To talk? To talk about what?"

"About you."

"I'm not understanding Alfred."

Suddenly the shadow of Bruce Wayne distilled itself on the wall in front of Dick and Alfred. "Dick I need... want to speak to you."

"Ohhhh kay." Dick immediately walked to the grandfather clock, knowing that most of the conversations that were real conversations took place down in the cave." As Dick reached his hand out Bruce immediately took it away.

"No Dick, we'll talk up here."

Oh, boy. Now Dick was really worried. What's going on?

"Dick, I met some interesting people last night."

"A new criminal to add to our gallery?" Dick questioned with a sweet smile. Damnit, Bruce thought, just like his Dad.

"No. I was rendered unconscious and while I was out, met your parents."

Both shock and silence engulfed the room. One glance at Dick led Bruce thinking that maybe he should have reconsidered his approach to such a delicate subject. Dick's mouth had dropped practically to his knees and his eyes immediately darted to the floor.

"Bruce, what the hell are you talking about?"

"I'm talking about meeting your father, then your mother."

"Why are you doing this huh? What the hell did I do lately to deserve this? Didn't I just recently help you put Gotham back together? Didn't I just throw away months of my life to get this city, the city abandoned by the nation, up and running again?"

"Dick, I don't mean to make you suffer, but I did meet them."

Dick looked at Bruce with a cold, shivering stare. "I just don't understand."

"I know, and to be honest, I don't really fully comprehend either, but it happened. Your dad told me to say Mi nischa veta poco albra."

Dick Grayson's face registered incomprehensible shock. Bright blue eyes darted from place to place and his face paled. His voice was but a whisper. "Oh my God.... how... you did. Meet them."

"Yes. What is that phrase Dick, what does it mean?"

" My Dad used to say it all the time to me when he was tucking me in at night. It's Romany. It means 'I love you my little son.' I ... just... haven't heard it in so long."

"I know Dick. I know." With that Bruce Wayne took five steps and leaned his son into his arms. Holding him. Dick Grayson seemed like that little boy again, and practically disappeared into the larger man's chest, while small sniffles resumed.

"They're great, aren't they?" Dick said, as he pushed Bruce away to look him squarely in the eye.

"Yes, they are. They're just like you. And you look just like your mother."

Dick Grayson smiled. "Yeah, I know. I used to hate it. Bruce, are they... are they happy with me?"

"God Dick, they are so proud of you. They love you so much."

"Yeah, I know. I just, it just still hurts, after all this time."

"I know. I know." While remembering late John Grayson's last words, Bruce Wayne held Dick Grayson a little longer than necessary. Held him and hoped that his parents were smiling down on him. That he was doing what both sets of parents wanted him to do. Love fully again. Love and never let go or push away.

End
file.